

**BOARD OF VISITORS
BOARD MEETING
ELECTRONIC MEETING**

October 15, 2020

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Ms. Wilmer, Rector, called the NSU Board of Visitors Retreat to order at approximately 9:10 a.m. A quorum of the Board was established with a 9-0 Roll Call vote. Below is a list of individuals that joined the webinar.

Participants – Board Members

Ms. Joan G. Wilmer, Rector
Mr. Devon M. Henry, Secretary
Mr. Dwayne B. Blake
Ms. Mary L. Blunt
Bishop Kim W. Brown
The Honorable Jean W. Cunningham
The Honorable James W. Dyke, Jr.
Mr. BK Fulton
Mr. Larry A. Griffith
Dr. Harold “Harry” L. Watkins, II

Non-Participants – Absent Board Members

Dr. Deborah M. DiCroce, Vice Rector
Mr. Michael J. Helpinstill
Dr. Tamara A. Jones

Participant – Faculty Representative to the Board

Dr. Ashley N. Haines, Faculty Senate President and Associate Professor, Biology

Participant – Guest Speaker

Mr. Jarrett L. Carter, Founding Editor, HBCUDigest.com

Participant - Counsel

Ms. Pamela F. Boston, University Counsel and Senior Assistant Attorney General

Participants – NSU Administrators and Staff

Dr. Javaune Adams-Gaston, President
Dr. Justin L. Moses, Vice President for Operations and Chief Strategist for Institutional Effectiveness
Dr. DoVeanna Fulton, Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs
Mr. Gerald E. Hunter, Vice President, Finance and Administration
Dr. Leonard E. Brown, Vice President, Student Affairs

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Participants - NSU Administrators and Staff (continued):

Mr. Ericke S. Cage, Executive Advisor to the President and Board of Visitors for Policy, Compliance and University Ombudsman (*Also, observer for a portion of the meeting*)

Ms. Melody Webb, Athletics Director

Ms. Derika L. Burgess, Interim Chief Audit Executive

Dr. Michael M. Shackelford, COVID-19 Director of Operations

Ms. Tanya S. White, Special Assistant to the President

Mr. Rasool A. Shabazz, Project Engineer, Office of Information Technology

Mrs. April T. Allbritton, Office Manager/Board Liaison

Observers – NSU Administrators and Staff

Mr. Clifford Porter, Vice President, University Advancement

Dr. Juan Alexander, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management

Dr. Andrew Carrington, Assistant Vice President, Finance & Administration

Mr. Stanley Donaldson, Director, Media Relations

Dr. Andrea Neal, Associate Vice Provost

Dr. Aurelia Williams, Interim Vice Provost for Academic Administration

Observers – NSU Faculty

Ms. Sharon Alston, Assistant Professor, Social Work

Dr. Bertha Escoffery, Adjunct Professor

Dr. Felicia Doswell, Associate Professor, Computer Science

Dr. Thorna Humphries, Associate Professor, Computer Science

Dr. Mamie Johnson, Associate Professor, English

Dr. Rasha Morsi, Professor and Graduate Program Coordinator

Ms. Lisa J. Scott, Instructor, Nursing and Allied Health

Dr. Kathleen Thomas, Associate Professor, Health, Physical Education, & Exercise Science

Dr. Ronald Thomas, Professor, Psychology

Dr. Lamiaa S. Youssef, Professor, English and Foreign Languages

2. Opening Remarks

Rector Wilmer welcomed everyone and provided an overview of the discussion items to occur over the course of the day and on Friday. She informed the Board and President that her personal cell was not working, and in the interim to use her work cell number.

Dr. Adams-Gaston expressed appreciation to the Board for their time, energy, thoughtfulness and the depth with which members will engage with the administration during the extended meeting timeframe. She announced that NSU is now a Top 20 HBCU having moved up five spaces in the *U.S. News and World Report* ranking. This is due in part to how our peers now see us and increased enrollment. This also speaks to NSU's growing prominence.

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- 3. 21st Century HBCU** – Dr. Adams-Gaston welcomed and introduced the guest speaker, Mr. Jarrett Carter, Sr. His bio is below.

A native of Seat Pleasant, MD, Mr. Carter graduated from Morgan State University in 2003 with a bachelor's degree in English with a journalism concentration. In 2010, he launched the HBCU Digest, an online daily news blog dedicated to coverage of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) throughout the United States, is read by more than 1.1 million people annually in 121 nations worldwide.

Mr. Carter has worked as columnist for The Huffington Post, where he filed exclusive editorial and original feature content on people, culture and issues at HBCUs for the Black Voices imprint of the online publication. He is the host of the HBCU Digest Podcast Series and the creator of the National HBCU Media Week, an annual event which provides training, networking and recognition for students, faculty, administrators and executives of HBCUs through the National HBCU Media Summit, and the annual HBCU Awards ceremony.

Mr. Carter lives in Baltimore with his wife Dr. La Keita D. Carter, and their children, Jarrett Jr., Landen, Colton and Alyce.

Mr. Carter's remarks are summarized as follows (*not necessarily in the exact order as presented*):

- Spoke on the closing of St. Paul's College in 2013 and how now the city of Lawrenceville, VA, is interested in making that land/facility available for economic and workforce development usage for things like drone technology and training, a conference center, or hospitality.

On Mr. Carter's behalf, the Board Liaison was asked to forward an article to the Board on St. Paul's College being explored as a re-use project.

- Enrollment during the pandemic at public and private institutions is pretty much stable. At some institutions the enrollment has increased, as some students prefer to be stuck at college rather than at home.
- Collectively, HBCUs are probably going to surpass \$500 M in gifts and contracts. Philanthropy within the sector is breaking records. This suggests that HBCUs are front of mind for people in the midst of this pandemic and racial strife where there is a need to level set, or rectify how African Americans are being treated.

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- HBCUs have proven to be uniquely resilient in managing the COVID-19 outbreak. This will be significant as HBCUs embark on recruiting for the upcoming spring. Parents will feel that HBCUs are a safe place. As of now, HBCUs are regarded in good space for managing the virus well.
- More HBCUs are discovering that there is value in working with the media, and there is value in engaging PR firms to have your story told on a national perspective. The timing is working very well, as it is giving birth to the opportunity for HBCUs and our missions to be lifted up to a more diverse audience. Presently, there is a captive audience and a captive market. You must get your story out there.
- The COVID-19 era, forever how long this will last, is going to have significant impact for years to come. Much of which will have nothing to do with institutional capacity, or wherewithal as leaders. It will have more to do with whether the federal government, or the state government will provide investments to make sure that people are aware that college is a good landing spot when you are not employed.
- The number one thing HBCUs will have to consider is how the virus could still negatively impact the school, community and the constituent base should African Americans refuse to take the vaccine, if and when one becomes available. This will no longer be a national problem, but rather an institutional problem, a cultural problem. HBCUs will have to consider, “What happens when the coronavirus becomes a black virus?”
- The number two thing is the financial needs of students coming from households with job loss, increased healthcare costs, but no additional plans for stimulus. What will be the outcome for your institution? What happens when people say the monies are gone and that you were provided funding to stay afloat, but now you are on your own? What happens to your endowment? What happens to your recruitment and marketing infrastructure? What will be the new definition of institutional attrition?
- Other questions or items to consider:
 - What if people are taking the vaccine and are still getting sick? What does that do to your quarantine, or your “you have got to go home process?”
 - What are you going to have to deal with in terms of mental health for your students and faculty? Nationally, isolation and untreated mental health issues are coming onto campus. What kind of stress does this put on your counseling and mental health resources on the campus, and also your public safety infrastructure?
 - How is Norfolk State aligning itself with the industries of today, and the industries of tomorrow? If you are doing things that tie you as an industrial partner, as an

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inextricable industrial asset, you will have revenue, you will have branding, and you will have infrastructure and capacity.

- HBCUs should begin to look at top employers or workforce hubs in their cities and states. In addition, look at ways of becoming a vibrant employment research cultural hub. There should be a cyclical ecosystem of mutual interests between Norfolk State, the city and local businesses surrounding campus.
- Does NSU have a civic plan in line with what the city is doing? Or, is Norfolk State helping to drive what the plan should look like? What you do as an institution, in large part, dictates how many young black professionals are going to be in your locale.
- Are you taking full advantage of your physical plant? A lot of universities forget to do this.
- Even in the midst of the pandemic, police violence and political turmoil, nobody does turmoil better than us – HBCUs. This is just a continuation of what we have always done – doing more with less. People are interested in how HBCUs have been able to maintain. Do not be surprised if you are contacted for advice.

In addition, the current climate has brought students' interests to HBCUs, so there is an opportunity now for HBCUs to leverage the Black Lives Matter movement, and the interests that the nation has on the life of African American students.

- Futuristically, HBCUs should be looking at how they can make money in this climate. What is your niche? You should be partnering for pipelines to degrees and asking companies about their personnel needs. Build your talent pools. *Also, there is a buzz around the de-escalation of police. You may want to consider becoming a training hub for the de-escalation of police.*
- Make use of non-academicians to impart knowledge to your students. Top level executives are open to performing lectures and teaching courses.

Mr. Carter shared that he was recruited to teach Journalism at the City University of New York. He added that he has never been approached by HBCU to teach.

- Consider being a leader in providing diversity training to businesses. Leverage your talent and partner with other schools, if need be. Be mindful that sometimes partnerships with Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) end up with the PWI taking over the project.

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Mr. Carter opened the floor to questions.

In response to Mr. Fulton, Mr. Carter stated that even though NSU did not directly receive part of the \$500 M donation, part of the donation went to the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCFF), which means some funds will find their way to NSU. Also, NSU can leverage its membership as an HBCU/peer institution to say to donors, we are doing the same thing as Howard University here at NSU, so why not invest in us?

You should be aware that there have been smaller \$1 M or \$2 M dollar donations. These are not being publicized, but they are happening. Only the big gifts make the headlines. Businesses and organizations are taking notice and saying, there's an HBCU in my community, or in my state, and they are beginning to give.

Also, HBCUs usually do not put a lot of marketing mechanisms into place for people who actually help African American students to make decisions about college. You can reach students through their aunts, teachers, coaches, churches and some Greek organizations that do college tours at HBCUs. HBCUs should put a lot more stock into the people that recruit. You are seeing a lot more younger alumni reaching out to high school students as well. You need stakeholders, who can influence students and help edge their choice along. Recruitment is getting tougher in light of PWIs becoming more aggressive about talking with minority students and providing funds needed to attend school.

In response to Rector Wilmer, Mr. Carter mentioned institutions that are working with organizations that are providing their employees pipelines to degrees. For instance, Central State partnered with the AFL CIO and Paul Quinn College just joined the Guild Network. Adult learners are the fastest growing student group going to college. Adult learners are looking to build credentials and experience.

Bishop Brown mentioned Elizabeth City State University's partnership with the Coast Guard and how that is panning out.

Mr. Dyke commented on NSU possibly partnering with Virginia State on their new institute (a political leadership program for African Americans in Virginia), especially since there are a significant number of legislators, who are Norfolk State graduates. He also spoke on the Cybersecurity Initiative.

Dr. Adams-Gaston stated that NSU is working with ODU as part of the Commonwealth's Cybersecurity Initiative, as the two institutions are a part the node that is located here in the Hampton Roads area.

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Dr. Adams-Gaston stated that she served on a panel for the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce where the focus was on workforce and education. This helps to put NSU in the arena for those types of partnerships.

There was a brief discussion about the historical underfunding of HBCUs and from that conversation the following recommendation was made: *NSU should partner with other HBCUs in Virginia (VSU, HU, and VUU) to raise up a serious discussion about the fact that for years and years the Commonwealth has consistently underfunded HBCUs. NSU's Center for African American Public Policy can provide the research and data to support this undertaking.*

There being no additional questions for Mr. Carter, he stated that in his opinion, NSU is in a good place. He thanked the President, Rector and the Board for the invitation to speak. At a request for Mr. Carter's contact information from Mr. Henry, the Board Liaison was instructed to share the information with the entire Board.

Mr. Carter continued on the webinar to listen Dr. Adams-Gaston's remarks.

4. **State of the University** – Dr. Adams-Gaston's comments are summarized below (*not necessarily in the exact order as presented*):

- **Enrollment** – Projected 5,250. Actual 5,460. Many schools lost enrollment, while NSU gained enrollment. For many of our students, NSU is a safer environment than the environment that they might be in if they were in their homes. The university was able to receive 87% of the students needed on campus to break even.

COVID-19 Update – Almost 2,600 individuals were tested including campus and commuter students, faculty and staff. There were eighteen (18) confirmed positive tests. Sixteen (16) were students who live on campus and the other two (2) were students who live off campus. The positivity rate is .0068.

In response to Bishop Brown regarding a missed opportunity to host football games on campus, Dr. Adams-Gaston reported that Ms. Webb brought the opportunity to her attention. However, she was concerned about people coming on campus in large groups in an environment where the university was really trying to slow, or stop the spread of COVID-19. As the City of Norfolk is an area on the designated watch list, this furthers the additional need for caution on behalf of the university. Her decision was not to host at that time; but new opportunities will be reviewed situationally.

- NSU's Center for African American Public Policy (CAAPP) was a key component to helping the university arrange the Senatorial debate on campus. Over 200 media outlets picked up the broadcast and there were millions of viewers. A 30-second spot on Norfolk

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State was shown twice on the day of the program, and once when it was televised. Of note, *The Washington Post* said that the debate happened exactly how a debate should go and the two interviewers, who were black female HBCU graduates (one from Norfolk State University and one from Hampton University) were praised for their handling of the debate.

- NSU will be known for its CAAPP, STEM, Cybersecurity, Health, and Health Disparity among Black Americans and other individuals.
- NSU, at its core is a teaching institution, but will also include research and service.
- NSU is the largest and also one of the most affordable HBCUs in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- Being aggressive with advocacy, she and VSU's President are in constant contact. They are at the front of legislators' minds in Richmond and in DC, working together as necessary and separately as desired.
- For institutional alignment and operational excellence and strategic planning, NSU seeks to become the best managed four-year institution in Virginia.
- Currently, working on an articulation agreement with the Navy to become a full partner to provide online courses for their service personnel.
- Having continued discussions with the Presidents of Tidewater Community College and Northern Virginia Community College on initiatives to increase transfers.
- Working with Academic Partnerships, Inc., to solidify an agreement for online support. This will help to change the trajectory of NSU, because it will widen the door virtually with Academic Partnerships pulling the students into NSU.
- The Virginia College Access Network (VCAN) program will provide free tuition to students, who live within 25 miles of campus, and want to come to NSU. Outreach is being developed to reach these prospective students.
- NSU has a MOU with the Commonwealth of Virginia for U-Teach, which will graduate teachers of tomorrow.
- All students should have an internship. Sixty-seven percent of students, who do an internship receive a job offer. NSU through its Innovation Center just formed an alliance with Ferguson Enterprises to provide internships to our students.

In response to a question regarding the placement rate of NSU students, Dr. Adams-Gaston stated she believed our number is 67%, but she will confirm the actual number.

Action Items:

- ***Provide actual placement rate of NSU students.***
- ***Provide the names of companies who provide internships and recruit NSU students.***
- ***Provide names of prominent graduates and the companies they work for.***
Mr. Griffith recommended that Dr. Adams-Gaston could fast-track compilation of the information by working with LinkedIn.
- ***Provide a list of companies the university is pitching to, or want to be in front of as far as internships.***
Mr. Griffith stated that Board members could help make connections to these companies. Noted that he is out in Silicon Valley all the time.

Recommendation – Ask LinkedIn if they are able to create a quasi platform/portal as a forum for Norfolk State alumni professionals.

Board members also asked if the university participates in the Honda Campus All-Star Challenge and the HBCU Battle of the Brains, as these help to showcase the academic strength of our students. Dr. Adams-Gaston responded yes, the university participates in both. The students were not able to travel to California this year for the Honda Campus All-Star Challenge due to COVID; however, there was virtual participation.

- Funding of \$100,000 each has been set aside for both faculty and staff development.
- Received one patent last year and working on others.
- Meeting with Dominion Energy executives next week to discuss a \$3M grant proposal.
- The university was added to the Department of Treasury’s General Schedule for federal contracting opportunities thanks to Dr. Aurelia Williams.
- Established a standalone Office of Title IX to champion equity and inclusion.
- Establishing a centralized compliance model by including a Chief Compliance Officer.
- A training session is being scheduled for the executive team, vice provosts, deans and others on compliance and ethical behavior. The Board will be informed of the session date and time should they wish to register.
- The university is working toward Level II Authority by 2022.

Dr. Adams-Gaston briefly explained the limitations of having Level I Authority and noted a recent technology issue where the university had trouble contacting the vendor.

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The possibility of changing a vendor with Level I is difficult, but under Level II this could be easily done.

The university is investing heavily in technology resources to create the infrastructure that is needed for campus.

Noted that she was invited to sit on a panel with the FCC Commissioner to talk about the digital divide, particularly, in black and brown populations.

- Approached regarding a hospitality partnership opportunity for the proposed Casino. She will need to engage the Board in a conversation regarding this opportunity.
- Working with the consultant to set up the capital campaign. In the interim, the President is hosting donor dinners (one donor and guest) at the University House.
- The five strategic objectives that are topics for the breakout sessions are as follows:
 - 1) Student Success;
 - 2) Institutional Alignment, Operational Excellence and Strategic Planning;
 - 3) Shared Governance and Professional Development;
 - 4) Fundraising and Endowment Growth; and
 - 5) External Engagement and Partnerships.

In respond to Ms. Blunt, Dr. Adams-Gaston stated that financial viability was not included as a separate objective. It is an overall item, and will be discussed under number 1) Student Success, because if the university does not have financial viability there will be no students.

5. Virtual Breakout Groups

In the essence of time, the Board took a brief break at 11:25 a.m. before joining their respective breakout rooms at approximately 11:40 a.m. Rector Wilmer stated that members of the Board previously received their breakout assignment to which they were randomly placed in one of the five topic areas listed above. She noted that the placement is not tied to Committee membership. This is to get the thought leadership of the Board on very specific questions. There will be only one or two questions as part of the scope of each discussion.

Breakout Group 5 – Three members of the Board (Mr. Fulton, Ms. Cunningham and Dr. Watkins) attended this breakout on External Engagement and Partnerships with Mr. Ericke Cage, Executive Advisor to the President and the Board of Visitors, leading the discussion. No actions were taken.

All of the other Breakout Groups included one or two Board members as participants.

The Board returned from the breakout sessions and the full Board meeting resumed at approximately 12:15 p.m. Since there was not enough time for each of the Breakout Groups to report out, this was deferred to a future meeting.

6. Public Comment – No one signed up for public comment.

7. Adjournment

Rector Wilmer stated that the financial health of the university is very important to the Board. As Dr. Adams-Gaston moved her slide deck around to present in line with what the speaker conveyed, she will present the financials during Friday's meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

April T. Allbritton, Board Liaison

Devon M. Henry, Secretary
Board of Visitors`